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Page Page Page

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Row Looms on CIA's 'Can't Win in Asia' Paper

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WASHINGTON — A ranking Central Intelligence Agency official believes there is "serious doubt" the Communist rebellion in South Viet Nam can be quelled and that a "prolonged stalemate" might be all the West can hope for.

This conclusion, reached in a scholarly paper called "Trends in the World Situation," promises to set off a political explosion because of Sen. Goldwater's determination to make the Vietnamese war a major campaign issue. The Republican presidential candidate accuses the administration of being timid in dealing with Communists.

Although the CIA was prepared to allow publication of the entire paper in a scholarly journal, the administration became concerned when it learned that one

newspaper—the Chicago Tribune—had acquired a copy. The newspaper was understood to be planning a story of the document today.

The State Department took the unusual step of attempting to reduce the impact of the story by making the article available to a small group of State Department reporters Friday night. At the same time, Secretary of State Dean Rusk reportedly said that the document did not represent the administration's viewpoint.

Rusk was said to have emphasized that the paper was the work of one man only—the author of it, Willard Matthias—and that it had no official status.

The 45-page paper, dated June 9, 1964, touched on virtually every aspect of the Cold War. Its controversial section on

South Viet Nam consisted of just these few lines:

"The guerilla war in South Viet Nam is in its fifth year and no end appears in sight. The Viet-Cong in the south, dependent largely on their own resources but under direction and control of the Communist regime in the North, are pressing their offensive more vigorously than ever. The political mistakes of the Diem regime inhibited the effective prosecution of the war, which is really more of a political contest than a military operation, and led to the regime's destruction.

"The counter-guerilla effort continues to flounder, partly because of the inherent difficulty of the problem and partly because Diem's successors have not yet demonstrated the leadership and inspiration necessary.

"There remains serious doubt that victory can be won, and the situation remains very fragile. If large-scale United States support continues, and if further political deterioration within South Viet Nam is prevented, at least a prolonged stalemate can be attained. There is also a chance that political evolution within the country and developments upon the world scene could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based on neutralization."

The paper will probably have international, as well as domestic, political repercussions.

If the Vietnamese came to believe there was predominant sentiment in Washington for a settlement through neutralization, the government's already uncertain grip on the country could be further weakened.